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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

FAIR

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ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/TPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

☒ Release ☐ Excise ☐ Deny

Exemption(s): _____

Declassify: ☐ In Part ☐ In Full

☐ Classify as _____ ☐ Extend as _____ ☐ Downgrade to _____

March 25, 1983

Date _____ Declassify on _____ Reason _____

Dear Mr. Chairman:

In further reply to your letter of February 23, 1983, which is also signed by Congressmen Bonker, Leach and Solarz, requesting additional information on the Argentine Government's release of information regarding disappeared persons, I am pleased to provide the following information.

In October last year our Embassy was informed by the Ministry of Interior that the Government had provided information to the families in some 1,426 cases of disappeared persons. The names of the individuals were not provided. The Ministry considers that the Government's responsibility is to inform the families. To our knowledge, the Government has not made specific information available to either the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, the Permanent Assembly, the Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS), or other human rights groups.

The Argentine Government's disclosure of information has not been actively publicized. Nevertheless, it has publicly stated that information has been provided to the families. The Subsecretary of Interior, for example, was quoted in the press in November as saying that of some 6,500 requests for information, the Government had provided information in 1,500 cases.

For your information the Department understands that the list compiled by the Permanent Assembly on Human Rights contains 5,566 cases of documented disappearances plus another 1,164 cases where complete information is lacking, a total of 6,730 cases rather than the 7,800 mentioned in your letter.

The Honorable

Michael D. Barnes,

Chairman, Subcommittee on

Western Hemisphere,

House of Representatives.

Since human rights organizations generally encourage families to go to the Interior Ministry for information, the Department presumes that there is a close correspondence between the Interior Ministry's list of requests for information about disappeared persons and the list compiled by the Permanent Assembly on Human rights.

The procedure for requesting information is well understood by both the human rights organizations and the families concerned. Regarding the Government's notification process, we understand that the petitioner receives a letter requesting an appearance at the Ministry or at a police station where information is provided orally. The Department does not know whether any remains were returned to family members. It should be noted that the publicity last October concerning unidentified graves began with Ministry of Interior information given to a petitioning family in February 1981.

As far as the Department is aware no members of the armed forces have been identified or prosecuted by the Government for their involvement in the cases in which information has been provided.

The Department continues to follow this tragic issue closely and hopes that the Argentine Government's report on the disappeared, promised for publication in the near future, will provide additional information on this situation.

With cordial regards,

Sincerely,


Powell A. Moore
Assistant Secretary for
Congressional Relations